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of *lejaje* (*Mariscus sp.*) or *lejhajzhi* (*Cyperus immensus*), rush-grasses which the ants seize with their antennae. The girls who have been stamping now set out with some friends from a neighbouring village, all armed with axes, to collect firewood. The girls of this company are age-mates; they share their labours, confide their love affairs, bathe together, and, in the late afternoon, when they go to the bush, they sit together elongating their *labia minora* (*hu kwcva*). Meanwhile the village lies basking and dreaming in the afternoon sun; except for the pecking fowls there is hardly a stir. '*Vu gae*' ('Where is it—beer'), says Raselaka to his son Sekware, as he returns with some poles on his shoulder for repairing his wife's granary. 'There is beer of *lejema* [work-party] over at Mudziri's,' is the reply; and the men, accompanied by the visitors, set out for the beer drink, knowing they will be allowed to partake even though they have done no work.

The hum of voices as you near a certain kraal leaves you in no doubt that this must be Mudziri's village. A fair crowd has gathered in the courtyard of the woman who is holding the *lejema* and a typical beer-drinking scene meets the eye. The centre of the picture is a large pot of beer placed in a rounded depression made for it in the courtyard. Beside it stands a flat winnowing basket containing long-handled calabash cups from which the beer is drunk. Beside the pot sits a man who serves the beer, using a beer-cup as ladle; he gives each cup to a young man of about twenty, who hands it round. The guests have ranged themselves on either side of the beer pot, women on one side, men on the other. As each calabash is emptied, it is brought back by the young man who is doing the waiting, to be filled. There is no hurry. Each one drinks at his leisure and conversation flows freely. Every one knows he will be given in his turn and, if one man is handed a second cup, he will pass it on to any one who has not yet been served, till all have had four or five. It is a pleasant social gathering and all the latest gossip is discussed. Small children toddle about in between the drinkers and may even be given a little of the beer. Ominously Pheduli remarks, 'Madume has seen police near Medingen. There appear to be four of them. What can they be wanting?' 'Oh,' replies Dwagu, 'they are no doubt raiding for tax defaulters!' There is general uneasiness, for about a fifth of the gathering are in arrears. Muhale is six years in arrears and, as he never goes to town to work, he has not once been caught. 'They won't catch me napping in my home to-night,' volunteers Mathukha. 'I shall go into the bush again. Are they Shangana-Tonga or Sotho, those police Madume saw?' a very relevant question, because the Shangana-Tonga, more likely than not recruited from outside the reserve, will not know these hiding places in the forests and caves. Here Pekula describes how his friend Setimela, who had himself always been in default and knew all the best hiding places, had joined the police the previous year. Consequently, at the very next raid the police made a most successful scoop, catching ninety-six defaulters, whom they marched to Duivelskloof.

The beer-pot is almost empty and people are merely sitting talking when the host calls Raselaka and his European guest aside into his reception hut, together with a few other intimates. A woman brings in a small

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571 619 565 The first thing that strikes us is the large number of constituent groups in the tribe. Some of these groups are totemic, others are not, they come from all points of the compass. They are not clans in the accepted sense of the word and have no functions as such. They are so interwoven with the nuclear group, the Lovedu, and with one another, that it is not easy to disentangle them; they are usually interspersed with the general population, but, for one reason here and another there, they may be more or less concentrated in some part of the country. It is chiefly through the district organization that they become linked, upon the pattern of kinship, of marriage and bride-price, with the nuclear group. These groups are not arranged in any definite hierarchy of rank, though rank is of very great importance in the society. Yet there are distinctions between them: some are as honoured as the Lovedu themselves; some are regarded as rather of lower status, though intermarriage with them is not disapproved; others, mostly of non-Sotho origin, are despised and intermarriage with them is frowned upon.

[565] 621 571 613 This does not mean that there are institutionalized classes; there are no rigid lines cutting across the society, just as there are no definite functions that may be said to hold together these constituent groups. Functions of a political nature are bound up with the districts, not with the constituent groups as such; some religious and ritual functions are also bound up with the districts, but most of them (except those of national importance) are connected with kin groups, and this never means the whole constituent group and, indeed, usually not the lineage, but people from both sides of the family. Yet the lineage as a descent group has at least legal significance and to it are attached certain rights. On the whole, however, the lineages pale into significance beside the marriage or the bilateral kin groups. There is structural tension between the group which gives the brides and the group which gives the cattle; but one notices in ordinary life not so much the tension as the elaborate measures for maintaining good relations. Not only do the relations between these two groups obtrude themselves more prominently than those within the patrilineal lineages, but it is the main concern of judicial proceedings in the *khoro*, the most impressive feature of public life, to preserve harmony between them. There is ample reason for this emphasis because the whole social structure and, through it, the whole tribal system and the strongest bonds with the queen, depend upon the proper functioning of these groups. And these are again a part of, and supported by, the bilateral kin, who, with the cattle, the one relying on the other, constitute the ultimate basis of the social structure.

[561] 571 There are also age-groupings in the society. They have some wide integrating functions, but on the whole the organization into regiments is unimpressive and for national purposes of little value. The hierarchy of age plays a part of importance, however, as a regulative device; but it is not coincident with the hierarchy of rank and thus often occasions serious tensions in the social structure. Finally, we should remind the reader, though we cannot deal with them here, of groupings brought about by modern conditions. There is the more or less compact Christian group, with its divergent interests and loyalties, and the very scattered

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kinship terminology and behaviour patterns, because they effectively operate only within narrow limits and are unsupported by tangible reciprocities beyond these limits—though distant relationship is spoken of as a 'flavour that is familiar' (*ledugela*, literally, a salty taste)—cannot hold together widely spread groups without assistance from other social arrangements. And this is precisely where the complex of kin segregated out by the cattle plays its decisive part. In generation after generation the links are renewed as grandfathers, fathers, sons, and grandsons all take their chief wives from and send their cattle to the same group. The bridegrooms not only give the cattle, they are perpetually giving all their lives, assisting the group of the brides in paying their debts and helping its male members with *munyualo* and in a hundred other ways; on the other hand, the brides or parents-in-law must always honour the bridegrooms and must maintain relationship with them by periodically bringing beer. These reciprocal obligations are at the very basis of the social system, of the interrelations between villages, of the bonds between the districts, and, finally, of the vast and intricate system that binds the nuclear group to the other groups and to the districts. If the lineages are the bricks out of which the society is constructed, the *mulɔɔ* and particularly the cattle-relatives (*mulɔɔ na dikhomu*) constitute the straw and the mortar, even the steel framework. It is also within the grouping brought about by these cattle that the fiercest conflicts occur. The price that is paid for a system, without which the fundamental structure and interrelations of the society might crumble to the ground, is certainly great; but in view of the functions of this system, it is perhaps not too great.

The *munyualo* system is also closely associated with the hierarchy of rank within the household. For the chief house of a polygynist is the house established by the cattle he received from the marriage of his sister; and at the same time the mistress of this house is his cattle-linked cross-cousin. The rewards of rank thus support the *munyualo* system. But rank reckoned in this way is not completely co-ordinated with seniority and other arrangements in the society. Some of the conflicts that arise are mentioned elsewhere. Here we shall refer briefly to social groupings based upon age. Firstly, there are age-mates (*thaga*). Girls, on the one hand, and boys, on the other, from an early age club together in their games and their activities. The group is a very loose one, wholly unorganized from without; it is not unlike our play gangs. Techniques of co-operation and group cohesion are well developed, especially among herdboys. They have their games, their heroes, and their bullies; their loyalties are, in a sense, in conflict with adults, but they are not anti-social. They may not tell tales out of school; if they do, adults will dismiss the matter as nonsense. Girls bathe together, get firewood together, play and stamp mealies together. They know one another's love affairs, they share one another's troubles. This group of age-mates is purely localised; it does not extend beyond the district and is often confined to a few neighbouring villages. In later life these age-mates continue to be on friendly, even intimate and joking terms—that is, as far as such is possible when they are also relatives. Among girls especially,

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561 a whole group of age-mates may be punished for the delinquency of one of the group, but it is not strictly the same group as played together; it might be young mothers only, because one of them had insulted an old woman.

[281] Besides the *thaga* there is the *murɔle*, the age-set brought into existence by the great national initiations, the *vudiga* for boys and the *vyali* for girls. (The word *murɔle* is also applied to cattle born in the same year.) But these age-sets have much less significance than in other tribes. Their chief function is to grade men and women into groups to which a distinctive name is given and by which they can readily reckon their relative ages. In the very old days the age-sets had some military function, but the queens relied less and less upon their fighting unit and to-day nothing is left of the old basis, if it was such, of the age-set. There is hardly a bond of mutual help and fellowship within the group. It does not constitute the unit that is usually called to perform communal duties for chief or tribe. This work is done by districts rather than by regiments, though it is said that in the old days there was some sort of division of labour as between the different sets, and to-day occasionally in the district of the capital the youngest age-set is called upon to weed the field of the queen. Certainly there is still the conception that each regiment is entitled to some particular portion of a beast that is slaughtered, but in practice there is no evidence of the observance of this rule. It is as if, with the breakdown of their military functions, their other specific functions also fell into disuse. What remains are the privileges attached to seniority and to age. The enclosure of the queen's *khɔrɔ* is built by men of all ages, called up by districts; this applies equally to labour on the roads, brick-making, and building. If young men are sometimes given a specific piece of work, it is primarily because they are young men or the young men of such and such a district, and never in our experience as the whole age-set in the tribe.

But the function of marking relative ages, seniority in respect of important activities in the tribe, is of very great importance. A young man who has gone through one initiation may have advanced one important stage towards adulthood, but he is still very far from being a complete man or from being initiated into the inner secrets of the 'school'. In the second initiation he becomes a shepherd (*mudabi*), in the third he may be one stage higher up (one of the *madidi*), and, if he is lucky, he may reach the fourth stage, that of the old men or of one of the officials of the initiation. Girls have to go through even more stages before full initiation in the puberty ceremonial. And in the *vyali*, as we saw in 1939, only men who were initiated as far back as 1894 were allowed in the enclosure for men. The beer and the food and delicacies which were brought by the girl initiates were for these old men, though occasionally they relented and passed on a pot of beer to their juniors watching the proceedings from outside the enclosure. And there is a similar hierarchy in the *gomana* cult. Only gradually are men introduced to the innermost secrets; only the old men play the part of the weird whistling spirits (*zwidzimi*), until they become too old to play the part and are replaced by younger men.

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remoulding of culture elements provides important clues to understanding the Lovedu. The *vudiga*, despite its admirable integration into Lovedu culture, still overstresses national regimentation and military virtues; it makes too much of the repudiation of association with women (a tendency rectified in the *vyali*); and the conception in it of an ordeal or revenge inflicted by adults, who have suffered circumcision, upon novices whose turn to suffer has come is too pronounced for a culture that abhors vengeance. It is curious, also, that in a society in which mates are born for one another the problem of harmonizing romantic love with the limited range of socially approved choices is not dealt with in the *khɔba* or the *vudiga*. Pre-marital sexual experiment is excluded at least as a means of avoiding individual incompatibilities; but such incompatibilities are not phrased as a difficulty in marriage, the sexual aspect of which is one of the least important in Lovedu society, and the institution of *vuɖavu* (of having lovers), with whom married much more than unmarried men or women form liaisons, gives an outlet to romanticism and supports the long suckling period. The chastity that is stressed in the *khɔba* is the pre-marital chastity that leads to no complications in the social structure, such as would be caused by the birth of a child to an unmarried girl; it does not preclude those satisfactions the desire for which is inevitably aroused by the great value that is placed upon fertility.

The rites of the *vudiga* and *khɔba* do not, as we have seen, change boys and girls from youth to full-fledged manhood. The transition is a gradual one. The *khɔba* becomes a bride; the bride after the birth of her first child is a *mudzana*; and she in turn, when her children marry, is a venerable old woman (*mukhegulu*). The bride is of small consequence even in her own home; for long she serves an apprenticeship under the control of her mother-in-law, who also takes her child out of her hands, baths it and feeds it. Only as an old woman does she reach the peak of her life. With a man the position is no different. After the *vudiga* he has a kind of legal status. After marriage he advances a further stage, but in his marital relations and as a father he is a child dependent upon advice from his elders. In public activities, such as in the courts, he still sits and listens, but the old men may entrust a case to him and his agemates to teach them a sense of responsibility. His helplessness is strikingly in evidence when a child is born to him: he does not see it at first, knows little of its progress, is ordered by the old women to seek this or that root, for what purpose he cannot tell, and, when the child is taken out of the hut, he is merely called, given medicine and told what to do with it. Finally, he must seek the advice of the old women as to when he may resume sexual intercourse with his wife. In other spheres of life also, the education of the man on the woman gradually advances. Craftsmanship, for instance, is the province of the old. Young men and women may learn from their fathers or mothers, but more usually the leisure and inclination come in their old age. A bride, fully occupied with housework and cultivation under the eye of her mother-in-law, has no time for pottery and mat-making; a young man's life is too unsettled to allow him quietly to sit down to make a basket or a stamping-block. The Lovedu

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561 are not at all anxious that their children should be taught craftsmanship in the mission schools.

887 In contrast to our customs, education never ends. As the physiological capacities vary, so new activities are undertaken. The culture always provides a place for the aptitudes of every stage of life, and neither men nor women become redundant in their old age, unless, indeed, they are utterly decrepit. With their physical decline, the culture provides new avenues and interests, to which they are continuously adjusting themselves. They suffer no sense of frustration, because their adjustments are dynamic. With us old age may be tragic: among women, the menopause may precipitate a crisis; among men, retiring from work often causes loss of interest in life and mental decay. But old Lovedu men and women always have something more to learn and to do. Women are not perturbed about external signs of age and complacently accept the end of their childbearing years, for these years bring increased influence, a fuller life, and greater rewards. If physical disability excludes old men from active political life, they receive ample compensation in reduced responsibilities and added prestige. There is no sense of impotence that upsets their balance. Instead, the changing sphere of their roles and their interests both keeps them stable and makes them precious to the society. The distress of old age among us is seldom seen, for rewards always stimulate the new adjustments that have to be made. Utter decrepitude is, however, a tragedy, fortunately ended by the neglect that we may regard as pitiless, but which realistically eliminates those who cannot attain even the mediocre level of achievement that the society calls for. He who cannot attain this level cannot make simple adjustments. But he who can still use his faculties in his old age may become a doctor of note, or a recognized authority on tribal legends or history. Finally, the psychological effect of beliefs attaching to the very old is to provide them with new incentives and renewed opportunities. The widespread suspicion that they have personal contacts with the world of darkness enhances their power, while their elevation, in anticipation, to godhead, for they are already so near death that they may be referred to as gods (*vadimo*), invests their dignity and their wishes with a supernatural halo.

871 Beside this all-pervasive system of tribal education, the modern school,
797 with its three R's, is as yet of small importance. It reaches, and only in
177 an attenuated form, no more than 3 to 5 per cent. of the children. Its methods are foreign, divorced from life; its teachers are immature, handicapped by inadequate equipment and by being uprooted from the soil of tribal culture. Yet the modern school is the force of the future. Education is passionately desired by the young, and the old would welcome it if they did not feel that it was subversive. There is no compulsion upon a scholar to become a Christian; but the belief persists that education and Christianity are inseparable. It is a belief that raises an awkward dilemma: must the school, which at the same time is the gateway to Christianity, give up its task of breaking down, or can it compromise with superstition? Can it work from within, integrated into the culture, without defeating its purpose? The answer cannot be given here. The task of the school and the Church is no less prodigious and delicate than

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The procedure to-day involved in witchcraft cases can be set into motion and these cases may be settled by district heads. In short, set rules as to competence do not exist and district heads are left to cope with as much as they can manage.

A brief discussion of some quasi-judicial processes will enable us to appreciate better, as it will introduce us to the procedure and spirit of the *khɔrɔ*. Firstly, there is the method by which especially old women deal with disrespectful or insulting behaviour of younger women. Should one or more young women play a practical joke upon or be disrespectful to an old woman, or playfully 'dance' an infant child, even their own, or prematurely try to make it sit up or walk or scold or beat it, in the presence of the grandmother or of an old woman, their behaviour is regarded as insulting. The conception is that old women in their role as midwives, rather than young mothers, have brought children into the world and the old, not the young, are the guardians of the babes. If one young woman arrogates to herself rights and privileges which belong to the old women, the latter are entitled to take suitable action. The insulted old woman reports to a few of her age-mates and in consultation they decide to punish the age-mates of the young woman resident in the same territorial unit—for example, a district. There is neither 'trial' nor tribunal. The punishment consists of three elements: the age-mates of the young women (say all those who have one baby) must brew beer with which to effect a reconciliation with the older women; in a rite accompanying the beer drink and resembling that used at initiations, the oldest woman canes her immediate junior, who in turn canes the next, and so on, including the culprits; and, finally, the culprits are read a lesson as to the iniquity of being disrespectful to their elders.

One day three young married women, in circumstances that implied disrespect, sent three old women a tiny quantity of snuff. The older women immediately fined the younger and vicariously all their age-mates living in the Christian settlement, for they were all residents there. They were told to grind snuff and restitute their wrong with beer. Five days later the twelve young married women of the settlement came to the house of the oldest woman, bringing large quantities of nuts, light beer, pumpkins, and other food; their husbands, in addition, sent a large tin of snuff and these 'gifts' were divided among the old women. Then followed the rite and the warning. On another occasion all the young mothers of a district were fined because one of them had 'danced' its baby in the presence of its grandmother. Likewise, it is said, though we have not seen a case, that the old women may fine a young father and his age-mates, if he forgets their privileges in regard to babies. But we cannot speak of regimental courts, the age-grades are not determined by the 'schools', the responsibility is territorial, and the punishment is 'beer of reconciliation' (largely replaced by food among Christians).

The second procedure, that called *hu khumɛlwa* (to beg pardon, to reconcile), has an enormous province and a profound significance, not only for legal arrangements, but in the whole culture. The procedure uses a *mukhumedi*, the emissary who intervenes on behalf of one of the parties to beg the pardon of the other. Its essence is not humiliation of